

REMARKS

Claims 24-45, as amended, are pending in the present application. Claims 1-23 were previously canceled without prejudice. In view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks that follow, Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration and timely indication of allowance.

In the Office Action mailed October 6, 2004, claims 24-25, 27, 32-37, 39 and 44-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,421,005 to Weaver et al. (hereinafter "Weaver"). Claims 26 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Weaver in view of U. S. Patent RE37,218 to Densmore et al. (hereinafter "Densmore"). Claims 29-31 and 41-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Weaver in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0077111 A1 to Spaling (hereinafter "Spaling"). Claims 28 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Weaver in view of U. S. Patent 6,574,211 to Padovani et al. (hereinafter "Padovani"). These rejections are moot.

Applicant's attorney appreciates the courtesies extended by the Examiner in an interview on February 3, 2005. During that interview, the differences between the claims and the prior art were discussed. The Examiner acknowledged that the claims, as amended, overcome the prior art of record, but indicated that a new search might be required.

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that all pending claims in the application are patentable. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of this application is earnestly solicited. Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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